

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 21 has been added. Support for the subject matter of Claim 21 can be found in the specification at least at pages 61, 62, 67, and 75. No new matter has been added and entry is respectfully requested. After entry of the above amendments, Claims 13-21 are pending.

First, the applicants gratefully acknowledge the courtesies extended by Examiner Walke in granting a telephonic interview on October 21, 2008. In that interview, Examiner Walke and Applicant's representative discussed the rejection of Claims 13-20 over the Sasaki EP and US references (i.e., European Patent Application No. 1 341 038 A2 or U.S. Patent No. 7,108 951). Applicant's representative pointed out that Claims 13-20 were fully supported in the JP 2002-315021 priority document, filed on October 29, 2002, and that a certified English language translation of the priority document had been previously submitted. Applicant's representative also pointed out that, since the JP priority document antedated the Sasaki EP and US references, neither of those references was available as prior art with respect to Claims 13-20. As a result of the interview, Examiner Walke agreed to issue a new final Official Action.

Applicants also gratefully acknowledge the indication that Claims 13-20 are allowed.

Claims 1-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over European Patent Application No. 1 341 038 A2 or U.S. Patent No. 7,108 951 to Sasaki et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-12 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer thereby obviating this rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 21 has been added. Claim 21 depends from allowed Claim 13. In addition, the subject matter of Claim 13 is fully supported in the JP 2002-315021 priority document (paragraph [0114], page 43, paragraph [0119] on page 46 and paragraph [0132] on page 51). Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 21 is therefore also patentable over the cited references. In addition, since Claim 21 depends from allowed Claim 13, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 21 does not present new issues requiring further consideration or search. Accordingly, entry of the amendment is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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